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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 USOSCE 000144

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR VCI/CCA, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR NILSSON, HAYDEN
JCS FOR J5 NORWOOD, COL SMITH
OSD FOR ISA (PERENYI)

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KCFE](#) [OSCE](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: CFE/JCG: JUNE 16: RUSSIA ACCUSES NATO OF
"WARPED" UNDERSTANDING IN BERLIN

¶1. (SBU) Summary: At the June 16 JCG plenary, Russia accused most of its CFE partners of demonstrating a distorted sense of the Russian position regarding CFE and the parallel actions package during the June 9-10 conventional arms control meetings in Berlin. Russia singled out Canada and the Czech Republic for particular criticism. Russia also characterized the current CFE situation as unbalanced, tipped in NATO's favor. A lengthy debate ensued in which a series of responses left Russia isolated. Separately, Belgium and the U.S., supported by 8 other delegations, criticized the Russian Federation's refusals of their recent CFE inspection notifications leaving Russia further alone. End Summary.

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Russia Concerned by "Warped" Understanding in Berlin
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¶2. (SBU) The Joint Consultative Group (JCG) met on June 16 under the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan (Muradov). Russian Head of Arms Control delegation Ulyanov immediately took the floor under general statements and conveyed surprise at the "warped" understanding of Russia's position shown by many CFE, and non-CFE states, at the June 9-10 Berlin meetings on conventional arms control. Ulyanov was concerned that some countries reiterated Istanbul Commitments "as if we were back in 2005 and not 2009." These countries, he said, were willing to abandon arms control for political interests that did not relate to CFE. He hoped they would soon "come back to reality."

¶3. (SBU) Ulyanov assured the JCG that the Russian delegation in Vienna was ready and willing to answer any questions regarding its position or its Aide-Memoire distributed to the JCG on May 5. It was unfortunate that some delegations did not resort to this opportunity. He tried to invite dialogue: "Don't be shy... ask questions!" He emphasized that the JCG should be used for further talks, in particular, on Russia's paper.

¶4. (SBU) Ulyanov noted that in Berlin the Canadian and Czech Republic delegations disagreed with the Russian position that NATO had only offered "vague promises." There was nothing in the parallel actions package, or in any other document, that outlined specific requirements for NATO that would be in

Russia's interest. Instead, all language referring to NATO action was characterized by conditional words like "would," i.e., "NATO would strive to seek ratification..." Russia, however, had been singled out on several occasions with very specific activities that it MUST complete, for example, withdrawing Russian forces from Moldova and Georgia.

15. (SBU) Without guarantees, Ulyanov stressed, Russia was left with "merely vague promises" on everything from ratification of A/CFE, to accession of the Baltic countries to the Treaty, to the definition of substantive armed forces, and so on.

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Allied Responses
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16. (SBU) Canada (Linteau) responded by reserving the right to reply at a future JCG plenary, but said its position remained to create the conditions necessary for entry into force of the Adapted CFE Treaty. Canada also confirmed it remained committed to the U.S.-led, NATO-supported parallel actions package.

17. (SBU) The Czech Republic (Reinohlova) reminded delegations that the Russian Aide-Memoire had come 14 months after the parallel actions package was presented officially to Russia. There were many formulations in the Russian paper that required clarification. Reinohlova, however, noted that in Berlin Russian MFA Director Antonov did not appear to "like questions." She sought, in particular, clarification

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on paragraph 11 in the Aide-Memoire (provisional application). Russia criticized NATO of "vague promises without guarantees," but what was NATO's guarantee that Russia would "as a gesture of goodwill consider the possibility of implementing some reciprocal transparency measures on a bilateral basis...prior to the provisional application or entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation?"

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Problem is Russia's Actions, Not Allied Misunderstandings
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18. (SBU) The U.S. (Neighbour) attested to the readiness of Russia's Vienna delegation to answer questions from delegations regarding Russia's position on CFE, both in plenary and on the margins. Neighbour pointed out that success in any negotiation depended, in part, on active listening and understanding counterpart positions. Questions on CFE, therefore, were good, even if allegedly "warped or vague." The "bad questions" were the ones not asked, leaving misunderstandings and missed opportunities. Neighbour said that in Berlin, Allies had asked questions stemming from HLTF discussions in Oberammergau. He reaffirmed that NATO countries sent a consistent, unified message in Berlin. Among other things, discussions in Berlin confirmed that there were first order issues that must be overcome in the existing bilateral channel, augmented with Allies, before discussions in other venues could be productive.

19. (SBU) Neighbour went on to note that Allies understand well Russia's position -- the problem is Russia's actions. This included unilateral suspension of CFE implementation, not provided for by either the CFE Treaty nor customary international law. This combined with Russia's military actions in Georgia, its deployment of forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and recognition of these Georgian regions as independent countries, had raised very serious concerns about Moscow's commitment to cooperative approaches to security and the CFE regime. Russia's actions were inconsistent with core CFE principles and only served to complicate prospects for progress on fulfillment of Russia's Istanbul Commitments with respect to Georgia as well as CFE more broadly.

Russia's position on adapted CFE and the parallel actions package further complicated the issue with its demands for major changes, such as to the flank regime, of the Adapted Treaty -- which Russia itself has signed and ratified.

Russia Claims Authorship Rights

¶10. (SBU) Ulyanov, in reply to the Canadian, Czech Republic, and U.S. delegations, restated his argument that CFE was a "Cold War relic." He expressed displeasure that the current CFE Treaty maintained a bloc-to-bloc approach and so had "lost all connection with reality." Ulyanov then referred to Canada's earlier statement that the parallel actions package was a U.S./NATO plan. He stressed that in fact the document was a "U.S.-Russia draft, with Russian proposals making up more than 1/3 of the draft." For the remainder of the JCG meeting, Ulyanov resorted to calling the parallel actions package the "U.S.-Russia plan," implying that NATO's voice had been left out. Ulyanov also said Russia would soon submit to the JCG a document outlining the legal rationale for its "moratorium" of CFE.

¶11. (SBU) The UK (Gare) reminded the Russian Federation that any agreement reached would be "promises for promises." Gare hoped that a legally-binding treaty would be a guarantee, but suspension of it by one State Party had proven that wrong. She pointed out that the very countries Ulyanov alluded to as "not committed to arms control" are the same countries that continue to implement the CFE Treaty without fail. On the contrary, the one country that accused others

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of lacking commitment was the very country that had unilaterally suspended CFE implementation. She also confirmed that it was clear the Alliance had had substantial input into the U.S.-Russia bilateral process.

Istanbul Commitments are Part and Parcel of Package

¶12. (SBU) Georgia (Giorgadze) stressed that no matter how hard Russia tried to erase the Istanbul Commitments from memory and their linkage to Adapted CFE, it would be impossible for entry into force "while Georgia is around this table." Guduata cannot be forgotten. Romania (Matei) did not agree with Russia's assessment that an "artificial link" had been forged between political commitments and arms control in 1999. Matei said that the political commitments were "part and parcel" of the package. Moldova (Cuc) said the parallel actions package provided "many answers" on fulfilling Istanbul Commitments and for moving forward. Russia (Ulyanov) shot back that the A/CFE Concluding Act was binding but that the attached political statements were not part of the Treaty and therefore not binding.

¶13. (SBU) The U.S. (Neighbour) noted its agreement with Romania's characterization of the Istanbul Commitments as "part and parcel" of A/CFE, and underlined that the Istanbul Commitments were an integral part of a "package deal" at Istanbul. He pointed to Allied proposals in the parallel actions package as the solution for all and the best way forward. Germany (Schweizer) helpfully said that specific points from the parallel actions package could not be disaggregated. He also stressed that the way forward would not be legally-binding, yet; it would be a political commitment. Schweizer also noted that delegations should bear in mind other commitments that had been reached since ¶1999.

Russia Criticized for Latest Noncompliance

¶14. (SBU) Belgium (de Brandt) "deplored" Russia's refusal of its intent to conduct a CFE inspection on June 2. The U.S. (Neighbour) supported Belgium and called attention to Russia's refusal on June 11 of a U.S. inspection notification. Neighbour added that NATO Allies, including the U.S., had offered a set of constructive and forward-looking proposals for parallel actions on key issues. He urged Russia to work cooperatively with us and other concerned CFE States Parties to reach agreement on the parallel actions package. Belgium and the U.S. were supported in statements by 8 other delegations) the UK, Turkey, Romania, Italy, Czech Republic, Portugal, Germany, and France. Russia did not reply.

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¶15. (SBU) At the request of the U.S. chair (Neighbour), on June 15 The Netherlands (Kleinjan) provided a readout of the June 9 meeting in Berlin in which Russia and several NATO Allies participated. Germany (Schweizer) provided a factual account of the June 10 Berlin meeting. The U.S. chair warned the Allies that Russia would criticize their positions in Berlin at the JCG the next day. Turkey (Begeg) questioned whether delegations would deliver statements at the opening of the Annual Security Review Conference on June 23, particularly in response to Russian FM Lavrov's remarks. The Czech Republic (Kyrian), Canada (Linteau), and the U.S. (Wright) said their delegations were preparing opening statements that would address the conference in general but not specifically reply to Lavrov.

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Next Meeting
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¶16. (U) NATO-T and JCG meetings on June 22 and 23, respectively, have been cancelled in light of the Annual Security Review Conference. The next JCG Plenary will be on June 30 under the chairmanship of Azerbaijan. The NATO-T, chaired by the U.S. for the month of June, will take place on June 29.
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